

TWO LITTLE FEET.

Oh, life, so prodigal of life!
Oh, love and destiny at strife!
Oh, earth, so full of busy feet!
Oh, woods and hills and all things sweet!
Was there no room amidst you all
For two more feet, so soft and small?
Didst envy me, where thousands sing,
The one bird that made all my spring,
My dove that had so many ways
Of making beautiful life's days?
No room! Or rather it may be
Earth was too small to imprison thee.
God only knows. I know I miss
Thy sweet caress, thy loving kiss,
The patter of thy dear small feet,
Thy hand is mine through lane and street;
While all that now remains to me
Is just a precious memory.
Two little feet 'neath earth's brown sod,
Two white wings somewhere safe with God.
—Chamber's Journal.

LOST: A BABY.

The Story of an Infant Truant and
the Trouble It Caused.

Montreal Star.

One morning Mrs. Sackett put Julia carefully into her carriage. She tucked her up with rugs, afghans, and shawls. Meg often wondered how the baby could breathe; but Julia was fat and hearty, and Meg knew that she grew heavier. So it must have agreed with her.

"Keep where it's pleasant and sunny, and take good care of her," said Mrs. Sackett.

She said this every day. Meg took as much care of Julia as any well-meaning but careless girl of 14 does a baby. At the crossing she thumped the carriage down into one gutter and banged it up out of the other. The baby was used to this, and only opened her eyes wide and gasped on arriving at the opposite side.

Meg was just turning the corner when she heard her mother's voice.

"Meg!"

"Yes'm!"

"Stop at Hurd's and send home three pounds of brown sugar and a half pound of tea!"

"Yes'm!"

Meg thrust her elbows through the handle of the baby carriage, and crocheted as she walked. Crocheting tidies was Meg's favorite pastime. She always had a tidy under way.

Hurd's was a corner grocery store, with a door opening on each of the two streets. Meg wheeled the carriage close to the show-window and fastened the wheel with a stone so that it couldn't roll off.

Julia sat still, gazed with attention at the resplendent advertisements of Jenk's soap and Tompkin's ginger, although she must have known the placards by heart. Babies have to endure so much which they do not understand that it is not surprising that they become philosophers.

Hurd's was crowded, as it always was in the morning, but Meg did not object to waiting. She chatted with Katie Allan and Lou French, and even drew out her tidy and did two rows before the salesman had time to attend to her.

Then she ordered sugar and tea with as grand an air as that worn by Mrs. Ponsonby, who "resided" in a four-story brown-stone house on a stylish avenue, while Meg lived in a "third flat."

"Wait for me!" said Katie Allen. "I've got to go to the butchers."

"All right," answered Meg.

She waited, and when Katie started she walked with her, talking briskly, down the street almost a block before she suddenly cried, "Oh, I forgot the baby!"

"What baby?" asked Katie.

"Why, I had our baby with me, and I've gone and left the carriage outside the store."

"There wasn't any baby at the door when we came out," replied Katie.

"Sure enough," said Meg, "there wasn't." She gazed in bewilderment at Katie's round eyes, and cried:

"Oh, I know. I came in at the other door—that's it. She's round on Harrison street."

The girls ran laughingly back and turned the corner. There was no baby nor carriage there.

They stared at each other, and Katie would have laughed but Meg looked so solemn.

"Perhaps you didn't bring her."

"Yes, I did! I left her just here. I know I did!"

"Could the carriage have rolled down the street?"

Meg looked up and down the street in vain. No carriage was in sight.

"Perhaps a policeman thought she was lost and took her to the station-house," suggested Katie.

Meg began to cry. Katie's words seemed cruel.

"Run home quick and tell your mother about it!"

Meg took Katie's advice. She ran fast, for she was frightened. Mrs. Sackett heard her story, and gave her a severe scolding for carelessness.

"Some boy took it to scare you. It must be about the neighborhood. Go and look!" she ordered. She was a hard-working woman, and treated things in a matter-of-fact way.

But when Meg came back to report that no one had seen baby or carriage anywhere, Mrs. Sackett became alarmed. She forgot to scold this time. She put on her bonnet and searched the street thoroughly. She inquired at all the stores, and even went to the police station.

Coming back from her fruitless expedition she dropped wearily into a chair by the door. Meg could not bear to see her mother's white face. She picked up her hat and crept down stairs.

An organ man was playing a lively tune and Lou French's little sisters were dancing to the music. They came up to ask Meg "if the baby was found," and Meg, without looking at them, choked and rushed down the street. She walked along in a breathless state for

several blocks, and happened to pause for breath just where there sat, on a doorstep, a boy about 12 years old, with a woebegone and tear-stained face.

Meg looked at him and asked abruptly, "What's the matter? Have you lost a baby?"

"Lost a baby!" shouted the boy indignantly. "You clear out of this!"

He seemed to look as if he thought she was making sport of him.

Meg was glad to "clear." She had only spoken out of the abundance of her thoughts. She walked along, surveying absently the windows she passed. She wondered if all the babies who lived in those houses were safe, or if their parents were hunting for any of them in grocery stores and police stations.

At the next corner she stopped again. Three women stood there talking. Said one of them, a small woman:

"I told her, says I, 'Mrs. Smith, you'd better report it at the station house. It belongs to somebody that's looking for it, of course!'" says I."

"She wouldn't take the trouble. She's too elegant!" remarked a stout woman, sarcastically.

"That's so," replied the first speaker. "She said: 'Let them that lost it look for it. Jimmie brought it home, and he'll have to amuse it till the mother comes,' she said. It served Jimmie right, though," the small woman added, decidedly. "A pretty trick to wheel home the wrong baby!"

Meg felt faint. She leaned against the railing. Whose baby were they talking about?

"Where was his own?" asked the third woman, who didn't seem to understand the circumstances.

"Why, you know he left it beside a store while he played marbles, and his mother came along and took it home to frighten him!"

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"You may depend she was mad, though, when he brought home a strange baby!"

"Ha! ha! ha!"

Could two babies be lost in one day! Meg stood in doubt a few minutes, while the two women discussed the story. She remembered the little boy whom she had seen up the street and stepped boldly up to the talkers.

"Will you please tell me who's found a baby?" she asked.

The eyes and tongues of all three were directed at her at once.

"Why?" "Well—have you lost one?"

"Mercy on us! do you know whose it is?"

Meg colored, but stood her ground.

"Somebody wheeled our baby away while I went into a store on an errand," she explained. "We've been looking for her all the morning."

The three women were delighted. They all insisted on escorting Meg down the street and into the right house. The mournful little boy sat on the front steps, his attitude showing his thorough disgust with life.

"You'd better go up and take care of your twins, Jimmie!" laughed the sarcastic woman.

Jimmie looked at her, his countenance expressing unutterable things.

"Come, Jimmie, come," cried the sharp little woman, "take us upstairs, we want to see your mother."

"This young lady has lost her baby, Jimmie," said the tall woman kindly. "Perhaps it's the one you've found."

Jimmie's face brightened. He stole a glance at Meg, remembering she had spoken to him. He turned into the house and led the way upstairs.

"Here's somebody come for that baby!" he announced gruffly.

He threw open the door and immediately got behind it, whence he could easily observe proceedings or escape if he should find it prudent.

"I thought somebody would come," exclaimed a drawing voice. "I knew the child would be called for. She evidently belonged to nice people."

The speaker rocked herself in a low chair. Her hair was in papers and she wore a pink wrapper. In her lap lay an embroidered tidy, at which she took languid stitches. It may be recorded here that Meg gave up tidies from that day.

She did not stop to examine the lady, however, but snatched up one of the two babies who crawled about the floor and hugged and kissed Julia more lovingly than she had ever done before.

Jimmie, behind the door, was startled. He wondered if he should feel the same affection for Lauretta if she were lost for three hours. The three women all talked together. The lady in the rocking-chair listened complacently, convinced that she had done all that could be expected when she allowed the strange baby to creep on her carpet till called for.

"I told Jimmie," she laughed, "he'd have two babies to take care of, instead of one."

Jimmie had disappeared into the hall. "I think I'll take the baby home to mamma; she's fretting about her," said Meg, holding the baby tight. "We're very much obliged to you, madam, for keeping her here."

Mrs. Smith bowed politely. She indicated with her forefinger where Meg would find the baby's clothes and wraps.

Meg dressed her and carried her carefully down stairs, followed by a cheerful "Good morning!" from Mrs. Smith. With a light heart she tucked Julia once more into her carriage. Jimmie stood watching her from the door.

"Say!" he called. "Are you really glad to get that kid back?"

Meg laughed out of her gladness. "Why, of course!"

"Did you feel awful bad when you found she was gone?"

"Of course," said Meg again. "What made you do such a stupid thing as to wheel home the wrong baby?"

"Oh," he said, grinning, "I didn't bring her home!" He lowered his voice. "I was playing with Bob Price, and I sent another fellow, and he didn't know her, you see!"

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Meg, looking at Jimmie with horror.

But Jimmie was bursting with his wrongs. "Perhaps you think you had the hardest time of it, but if you had to amuse an extra baby three hours, you'd know finding a baby was worse than losing one."

Meg was so impressed with his air of conviction that she said not a word.

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